

*Original*

1. Project Name: Amherst Community Connections One-Stop Resource Center

2. **\*\*Project Description:** The One-Stop Resource Center is a project of Amherst Community Connections. It helps people who are homeless or housing-challenged, and who are struggling to identify and address difficulties that prevent them from leading stable lives. The Center works intensively with individuals, on an ongoing basis, to help them make changes that support positive and healthy lives.

3. Project Location: Amherst Community Connections- 121 North Pleasant St., Amherst, MA

4. Budget Request: \$50,000.00

5. Type of Activity: (Check one)

☐ Family Stabilization

☒ Individual Stabilization

☐ Youth Development

☐ Economic Self-sufficiency (adult education)

☐ Food and Nutrition

☐ Health Services

☐ Emergency and Preventive Services: rental assistance, fuel assistance and shelter services

6. National Objective: Objective # 1 – benefitting low income/ extremely low income individuals

- Total Number of beneficiaries served: 500+ unique individuals/year with 3,000+ visits to ACC's One-Stop Resource Center for service/year
- Total Low/Moderate beneficiaries served: Same as above

**National Objective Description:**

Amherst Community Connections' (ACC) One-Stop Resource Center meets the first of the three national CDBG objectives; benefitting low- and moderate-income individuals from Amherst and surrounding towns. ACC provides ongoing case management support and financial assistance for Amherst area residents from the following at-risk and/or extremely low-income populations:

- Homeless individuals, who on average earn 0-20% of the Area Median Income (AMI).
- Elderly and/or disabled individuals in public subsidized housing, at  $\leq 30\%$  AMI.
- Low-income and/or disabled individuals who qualify for public assistance, at  $\leq 30\%$  AMI.
- Recently released inmates who have ties in Amherst, at 0-20% AMI.

Income and household size are documented by self-declaration.

#### **A. Demonstrate Consistency with Community Development Strategy:**

ACC's mission is consistent with the following 2017 Community Development Strategy priorities for social services: 1) supporting individual stabilization, 2) helping individuals attain economic self-sufficiency, and 3) provision of emergency or preventive services.

The purpose of Amherst Community Connections' One-Stop Resource Center is to provide a comprehensive range of assistance at a 45 hour-a-week, year-round facility, under one roof, to individuals who are low income, homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Stabilization of individual circumstances begins with ensuring that vital needs are met (shelter, nourishment, clothing, health care, emergency assistance) by assisting participants to connect to family and community in a timely and effective manner. Progress toward greater self-sufficiency is supported over the long term by creating a trauma-informed personalized plan, and collaborating with other local human service agencies to meet housing, employment, health and educational goals. In the case of actual or impending emergencies, financial assistance or means to obtain financial assistance are provided.

#### **B. Agency Information**

The mission of Amherst Community Connections is to empower, advocate and assist those in need in the Amherst area. Its Board of Directors includes former and current program participants/clients, and community members who actively work with people who are in need. On the basis of their involvement, ACC is able to design programs that truly reflect and meet the diverse needs of the community. Since 2009, Amherst Community Connections (ACC) has provided intensive case management, information/referral and advocacy services to homeless, disabled, elderly, inmates, and low-income individuals and families at multiple public sites, including ACC's downtown office, Jones Library, Craig's Place winter shelter, and Hampshire County Jail and House of Corrections. ACC is the only social service agency in Amherst that consistently focuses on the social service needs of individuals full-time and year-round. It is even open on all holidays and inclement weather, operating a soup kitchen when all other agencies are closed.

Though ACC was founded only seven years ago, its founder and executive director worked with disenfranchised people operating a community meal program in Amherst for over a decade prior to that. ACC was the first agency to provide major support to Amherst's first homeless drop-in place, the "Warming Place," in 2009 and later when it became a homeless shelter operated separately by two other agencies, including the current operator Craig's Doors. It was the first agency to set up a meal program that fed 30-plus shelter guests, volunteers and staff every night for the entire 185 nights of shelter season. This effort continued for two years, providing over 5000 meals per shelter season. From there, it transitioned to providing advocacy service to shelter guests at the shelter site. It focused on housing, and housing-related solutions such as increasing income by obtaining employment or social security benefits. ACC staff went to the shelter 3-5 nights a week consistently seeing 10 or more guests per night for advocacy work.

The people that ACC serves face extreme difficulties stabilizing their lives. Due to low or nonexistent income, their criminal background and/or eviction history, credit problems, and the lack of

affordable housing, it is almost impossible for ACC's participants to get off the streets and to rebuild their lives without service support. In 2013, working with Jerry Gates (a long-time housing developer and the president of Craig's Doors board of directors), ACC began a pilot project, "Amherst Transitional Housing Program," to provide housing and support service to people who are homeless in Amherst. The Program operated an 8-bedroom duplex housing up to 8 residents at a time. When the program completed its 24th month in late 2015, it had housed over 30 residents with support service onsite and offsite. Of the 21 who graduated from the program, 19 secured housing or employment/social security benefits.

From 2011 to the present, ACC has offered a Help Desk at the Jones Library, helping library patrons access information and referrals on local social and emergency services and housing. Patrons meet with ACC case workers for immediate advocacy and case management. ACC provides the Help Desk service two afternoons a week, assisting 10-15 patrons. Several hundred library patrons are assisted each year. This innovative approach has attracted the attention of Northampton Forbes Library. In 2015, ACC helped set up a Help Desk at the Forbes Library and staffed it with trained college interns. An information binder was created and made available to Forbes Library's patrons to refer to. The materials in the binder were designed and researched by ACC interns.

In 2012, ACC began its formal relationship with the Hampshire County Jail and House of Correction. Every month, ACC workers attend a re-entry meeting and meet with inmates in the Jail facility. These are inmates who have family or educational connections to Amherst and are planning on returning to Amherst after incarceration. They are assisted in meeting their housing, employment, or parole/probation schedule when they are released. Over the past five years, a couple of hundred inmates have received support while they are still incarcerated or after they are released.

In 2015-2016, building on this work and its experience operating a supportive housing program, ACC applied for and received a 3-year grant from the Town of Amherst to begin the Housing First program. This program is designed for people in Amherst who are chronically homeless. Providing intensive and focused support service weekly, the goal of the Program is to help chronically homeless individuals obtain self-sufficiency and permanent housing by the end of the three-year grant period if not sooner. Thanks to the effective and efficient work of ACC's Housing First social worker, after only five weeks since receiving the housing voucher, one of the participants has received a permanent voucher from Amherst Housing Authority. Thus, one of those on the Housing First waiting list will be getting off the waiting list. This is a happy time for all of us –the voucher-holders and our staff!

In November, 2015, to better serve local residents in need - the poor, disabled, elderly, formally incarcerated, and the homeless - ACC began a pilot "One-Stop Resource Center" on the first floor of the downtown Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst. The purpose of this daily drop-in center is to provide a comprehensive array of services to help those in need to get ahead. The range of free service includes offering food nourishment, internet and computer use, phones, office equipment, work stations, emergency funds, and one-on-one connection with case workers to listen and trouble-shoot. The goal is to assist them to increase their income, to stabilize their circumstances and eventually to become self-sufficient.

With access to a certified kitchen, a social hall, ample office space, a conference room, up-to-date computers/printer/copier equipment, and readily available and knowledgeable advocates and staff, the Center has been a safe gathering-place that offers a welcoming refuge to the weary and homeless.

The One-Stop Resource Center has now completed its first year of operation. We estimate that over 500 unique individuals have made more than 3,000 trips to the Center. Many people have seen their income increase either through employment or public benefits programs such as SNAP or Social Security. Over 60 participants have secured housing and are off the streets, or have paid their back rent and avoided homelessness. Others have received financial assistance from the Center for free bus passes, prescription copayment assistance, financial assistance in applying for state ID or birth certificate, and other necessities.

By addressing his/her situation holistically, in the same place with the same agency and the same case workers, one step at a time, participants are able to adopt a more coherent plan to improve their circumstances. The One-Stop Resource Center is the only service of this type and magnitude in Amherst area. It mirrors the service provided by the Hampshire Resource Center in Northampton which is operated by ServiceNet.

The pool of case workers is made up of professional staff and trained volunteers in social work, nursing, law, education, mental health, and other fields. They bring a rich variety of talents and skills to our work. Case workers are well-versed in empowering participants, initiating assessments of their needs, identifying and accessing useful resources. The Center produces user-friendly information materials that help participants overcome the obstacles to their search for housing and employment. It also generates summary sheets on the how/where/what, to empower participants to take actions to solve their problems. See **Appendix (1):** Sample of ACC Resource Guides or go to ACC website for the complete compilation of the resource guides <http://www.amherstcommunityconnections.net/resources/>

The Center's daily posting of client-appropriate job and housing listings have been used by ACC participants, homeless shelter guests and inmates at the jail. This resource is available both online and in hard copies. Weekly views of the postings total a couple hundred. No other agencies provide such a daily digest of accessible housing and employment openings. To make it to the list, housing has to be under \$650, on a bus route, local, and reachable by phone. Listed jobs have to be on a bus route, local, low- skill- barrier and CORI friendly. Many ACC participants have obtained housing and employment as a result of this service provided by the Center. See **Appendix (2):** Sample of Recent Postings of Housing and Job Opportunities or go to ACC website for the postings <http://www.amherstcommunityconnections.net/job-apartment-listing/>

Through ACC's experience working with at-risk individuals, we have learned that individual stabilization is not merely a matter of meeting vital needs, such as shelter or housing, employment, income, or benefits. Stabilization involves developing the inner strength to navigate uncertain situations and unknown outcomes and developing the willingness to receive support from others and take initiative to improve one's situation. ACC caseworkers encourage participants to employ their own skills and strengths to address personal challenges. We encourage taking small steps forward, despite fear of the unknown. We have noticed that some participants who have income remain homeless, because they worry about investing so much of their small income on a housing arrangement that might fall through, and land them in an even worse situation. While acknowledging their concerns, we reassure our

participants that we will help them access financial and other types of support to obtain housing and stay housed, and resume the housing search with them.

Our office hours total 45 hours per week: 8:30 am to 5:30 pm every weekday. It is the only resource center in Amherst that is open this many hours per week, and year-round. We provide twice as many hours of service to the public as the program in Northampton does. This schedule is coordinated with the morning closing of Craig's Doors during the shelter season, and allows individuals access to supportive services as soon as they arrive in downtown Amherst in the morning.

In addition to these forms of casework assistance, ACC has established other programs, in response to community needs:

- **The People's Fund:** a community-wide emergency fund that helps families or individuals to move in or become stabilized in housing. It is available on a per-request basis and is a donor-based fund, raised through our yearly campaign.
- **Supplemental Meal Assistance Program:** a program that fills gaps in Amherst community meal service, providing meals on days when other soup kitchens are closed due to holidays or inclement weather. This program serves 50-70 individuals per meal.
- **The Incubator Meeting:** a weekly meeting in which community members come together, share successes and frustrations of the day or week and work together to address life's challenges in a supportive community atmosphere. To enrich the meeting and expand the horizon of participants, experts from various fields make presentations on topics reflecting the needs of ACC's participants: repairing personal credit; overcoming CORI in job search; managing addiction, among other things. The meetings are well-attended, averaging 15-20 people per week. See **Appendix (3):** ACC Sponsored-events for January, 2017.

However, current funding limitations prevent ACC from continuing the One-Stop Resource Center. For the past year, ACC has spent its own funding, and a grant we received from the Community Foundation of Western Mass, to operate this project. We have found it is much needed and well-utilized. However, without CDBG or other external funding to partially offset the cost of the Program, it will be very difficult for ACC to continue to provide the One-Stop Resource Center service, with its case management and financial assistance to participants, to meet the growing demands of its primary constituency. The Center fills a huge hole in the local critical social service safety net.

ACC's short-term goals are to:

- Increase staff training and professional development by attending workshops and conferences;
- Increase funding from foundations and granters; broaden fundraising efforts to include more on-line fundraising;
- Increase community understanding of homelessness and its costs to tax payers;
- Promote public awareness on how housing is an important element in solving homelessness;
- Increase and enhance case-management and advocacy capacity to provide emergency assistance and individual stabilization;
- Continue to increase homeless individuals' access to housing, income, and other critical resources;
- Develop rental assistance programs for homeless or housing-insecure individuals.

Long-term goals will include collaborating with other service agencies and the Town of Amherst, to support:

- Creating permanent supportive housing options for chronically homeless individuals in Amherst
- Creating ultra-affordable housing options for extremely low- and no-income individuals (0 - 30% AMI)
- Developing supportive employment opportunities for homeless and disabled individuals
- Increasing mental health and substance abuse treatment services in Amherst
- As an organization, ACC will continue to improve its model for the ongoing training of volunteers and interns, and to sustain financial stability through outreach and fundraising.

### **C. Project Budget Information**

Since ACC's founding in 2009, its budget has been managed very attentively and frugally. ACC currently has sufficient reserves to cover more than nine (9) months of the operating budget. For the proposed project, the executive director has prepared a modest but efficient budget. The total annual budget for the One-Stop Resource Center is \$91,575 (See attached Program Budget). This covers 1 ½ FTE personnel costs which include all part time workers—a program director, case manager and office assistant. It also covers non-personnel costs such as rent for the facilities, professional insurance, client assistance and other office-related costs. The requested CDBG grant amount of \$50,000 will pay for about 55% of the cost of the operation. The remaining \$41,000 - about 45% - will be coming from fundraising and grant awards.

The grants include a \$14,000 award for a staff member position through the Federal Mature Worker program. ACC does three appeals/fundraisings per year: May, August and November. In addition, it also participates in the annual Valley Gives online fundraising event. Last year, ACC received an \$18,000 grant from Community Foundation of Western Mass to expand its case work capacity. This year, ACC is planning on applying again. So, ACC is confident it will hit the target raising the \$41,000 needed to meet the operating cost of the One-Stop Resource Center if the \$50,000 CDBG proposal is funded.

As a point of reference, our counterpart in Northampton opens about 20 hours a week and employs 3 ½ FTE workers<sup>1</sup>. The difference lies in ACC's ability to attract and retain high quality volunteers with professional backgrounds in law, clinical social work, nursing, education, and human service. ACC is very proud to be able to provide more service but at a considerably lower cost.

The budget is prepared by ACC's founder and executive director, Hwei-Ling Greeney. Ms. Greeney, prior to ACC, operated a local soup kitchen in Amherst. During her tenure from 1997-2009, as a soup kitchen operator, she prepared the annual budget, operated the program feeding the hungry in the community. Under her leadership and ability to budget responsibly, she was able to increase the service by 50% while keeping the budget low. When she served on the Amherst Select Board from 2005-2008, she had a reputation as a tough budget negotiator, who contributed to ensuring that the Town's reserves were replenished and grew in a healthy manner, even as sharp state budget cuts hit towns and cities in those years. Ms. Greeney established Amherst Community Connections in 2009 to respond to the housing and support service needs of the disfranchised, including the homeless, disabled, and incarcerated. Since 2009, the agency has experienced tremendous growth in its capacity to serve the needy and homeless, and yet the budget remains lean and healthy. The number of participants served has

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<sup>1</sup> Site visit and meeting with Katie Mierneki, director of ServiceNet Shelter and Housing Services, September, 2016

more than doubled, to the current 450 clients per year. Ms. Greeney's ability to seek out funding sources, and her expertise in delineating line items for clean and clear accounting, has served the agency well. While the past decade has been financially challenging for non-profit organizations generally, Ms. Greeney has managed to maintain financial stability. Currently, ACC is sustaining reserves sufficient to operate for at least nine (9) months in any economic downturn.

If awarded with the CDBG grant, ACC would hire an accountant/book-keeper to do payroll and book-keeping, to ensure clear budgeting and financial record-keeping. To get a head start, ACC has interviewed a local firm with a 30-year track record serving the community to fulfill this role.

#### **D. Project Description**

The One-Stop Resource Center is a program of Amherst Community Connections. During the period since November, 2015, it has served over 450 unique individuals from the Amherst area, with over 3,000 visits to ACC's downtown office. About one third of individuals are people who are homeless and the rest are people who are experiencing financial hardship and are at risk of becoming homeless. The proposed project—Amherst One-Stop Resource Center, has had a solid one-year operating history behind it.

During this one-year period, the office has been open daily 8:30 am to 5:30 pm. In the morning, drop-ins are welcome; in the afternoon, it is by appointment. On average, 4-5 case workers are on-site in the morning, and 2 in the afternoon. Case workers comprise two professional staff members and trained volunteers/interns. The office is equipped with computers, phones, internet, copier, printer and electronic charging stations. Food and drinks are served throughout the day. All are free. On average, 12-14 people daily received service in the office with an average of 30- to 60 minutes per visit. Participants pursue their own goals, such as housing search, resume writing, free phone application, and job searches and applications. The one-on-one participant-focused case management with the self-empowerment model has produced excellent results. We estimate that about 50% of the 500+ participants the One-Stop Resource Center serves have met one or more of their personal goals in getting food stamps, housing assistance, an increase in income/benefits, making and keeping appointments and completing job applications.

This is the second year that ACC is filing a CDBG application for the Project. This activity has been prioritized this year by the community, under the category of "Individual stabilization". The community has recognized that the needs of individuals are very different from those of families. The huge gaps in social services available to individuals have made it necessary to create a separate category for "individual stabilization" alongside the "family stabilization" category.

The number of individuals to be served by the Project is estimated to be about 500 people. They are people with either no income or extremely poor (< \$10,000/year). They are primarily people on disability income, which averages \$730 per month. They are people with mental or physical disabilities. It is estimated that about 30-40% of the 500 people served are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless due to housing eviction or electricity shut-off.

To assist people to become self-sufficient, the One-Stop Resource Center hosts weekly incubator meetings. People get together to seek mutual support by sharing their successes and tips on how to achieve success. In addition, presenters from various fields or service agencies make audience-friendly presentations on relevant topics such as careers for the 55+, the public housing screening process, safe needle-exchange services, and community college certificate programs. This gathering attracts 15-20 people every week. Many have attended the meeting since it began in February, 2015. See **Appendix (3) listed above** for the events. Or go to ACC's website for a record of some of the past speakers'

presentations: <http://www.amherstcommunityconnections.net/past-events>; and the upcoming events <http://www.amherstcommunityconnections.net/new-events>

### **E. Project Need**

The large number of unique participants served by the Center, over 500 during this one-year period, is solid proof that the Project is much needed. At the public hearing last year, the majority of the public spoke up in favor of ACC's application for funding the One-Stop Resource Center. Many of those present were individuals who were homeless or nearly homeless. They all expressed the need for case management and support service to help climb out of homelessness or to avoid becoming homeless.

The Amherst Housing Production Plan<sup>2</sup> states that the median rent was over \$1,100 per month in 2010, and that one needs to have an annual income of at least \$50,000 to afford this. This is beyond the means of moderate and low-income households, and far beyond the reach of extremely low-income (ELI) households. The Plan estimates that nearly 35% of Amherst households are paying over 50% of their income on housing. With this kind of housing burden, many Amherst residents need support, whether with temporary financial assistance or strategizing, to avoid eviction and homelessness. ACC has helped one individual per week on average to keep or find housing, by employing a variety of strategies worked out between individuals and case workers.

An average of about 12-14 unique individuals making a total of 55-60 visits to ACC each week of the year in need of information or assistance in stabilizing their basic circumstances – housing, bill payments, transportation, health insurance, medical or mental health care, and income.

### **F. Community Involvement and Support**

ACC has been a valuable partner to Town service providers for the past 7 years, beginning with Amherst's first attempt to provide assistance to the homeless at the Amherst Warming Place in 2009, which later became a homeless shelter in 2010. ACC organized volunteers to prepare and serve 5000 meals a year between 2009 and 2012. Later, in 2012-2014, it organized community volunteers and trained college students to staff the shelter. For the past two years, it provided advocacy three nights/week to shelter guests at the First Baptist Church.

During the pilot period this year, ACC staff visited and spoke with other agencies focused on housing stabilization, such as Hampshire County Resource Center, Springfield Friends of the Homeless, Samaritan Inn Homeless Shelter in Westfield, and Hampshire County Jail and House of Correction. The outcome of the research work has shaped the design of the Amherst One-Stop Resource Center.

The support that the pilot program has received from the community has been tremendous. The Center is able to attract the best qualified community volunteers and the brightest college interns to help staff the program at 45 hours a week is a testimony to the strength of the Project. As a result, ACC is able to grow its workforce with minimal financial impact from 1.5 FTE to 5 FTE. ACC has a roster of 10 volunteers and interns. They are from a diverse background of professions and disciplines such as law, clinical social work, nursing, higher education, mental health, faith community, psychology, public policy, among others. Several of our intern alums upon graduation work in organizations such as Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Western Mass Fair Housing Center, and other human service organizations in Boston areas.

ACC's monthly newsletter publication, "*What's Up*", which began in January this year, gives a unique voice to the Center's participants. Their feedback about ACC's programming and services in this publication is another example of community input in the development of the Resource Center. See **Appendix (4) for a sample of the newsletter**. Please also go to ACC's website for the complete publication of the 12 issues of monthly newsletter <http://www.amherstcommunityconnections.net/newsletters/>

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<sup>2</sup> Housing Production Plan <https://www.amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/22276> p.2



## **G. Project Feasibility**

The Amherst One-Stop Resource Center project is feasible because it has been successfully pilot-tested for 12 months. The data show it is well utilized by nearly 500 unique individuals making a total of 3000 visits, with an average of 30-45 minutes per visit. The Center's model of professional staffing and supervised volunteers/interns has been a successful staffing model. The staff, interns and volunteers, together equivalent to 6 FTE, cover the one-on-one service needs, while the staff salary expenditure remains at 1.5 FTE. This level of efficiency is unparalleled from the labor input to the output in well-being, based on the increase in income/public benefit that participants receive. See **Appendix (5) for One-Stop Resource Center's 2016 Monthly Attendance.**

**Past projects completion record:** ACC has successfully demonstrated in its One-Stop Resource Center project that it is capable of proceeding at the time of award, can effectively manage the project, can physically and financially accomplish it within the grant period. As another example, in the fall of 2016, ACC received an Amherst CPA contract for its Housing-First project. In collaboration with several local human service organizations, ACC reached out to chronically homeless individuals to file applications. Within 5 weeks, applications were received and the review was completed and names were drawn in a lottery-drawing public forum. On the same day of the lottery drawing, a social worker began to work with the newly-minted voucher-holders to begin their journeys to end chronic homelessness. In the spring of 2015, ACC received a grant from Community Foundation of Western Mass for a similar project with the goals of self-reliance and housing stabilization for individuals. It completed the project in the spring of 2016 meeting 100% of the goals.

**Staffing:** Executive Director/Program Director: oversees the One-Stop Resource Center; recruits, trains and supports volunteers and interns. Case Manager: responsible for case management, working with volunteers and peer advocate interns, and coordinating case management. Office Manager: responsible for the operational set-up of the One-Stop Resource Center, assisting the case manager, and conducting initial intake of participants, and scheduling follow-ups.

### **Project milestones and timeline:**

- Hiring of case manager: Complete the hiring on July 1, 2017--subject to official contract signing
- Recruitment, training of volunteers and interns: Beginning on July 1, 2017, to be done via ACC website and in person at area colleges, UMass, and local civic organizations such as Amherst Club, Rotary Club, and Amherst Woman's Club. Recruitment, orientation and training will be provided by the Program Director on an on-going basis.
- Research for, and production of relevant information for dissemination; weekly speaker invitation and publicity for the Incubator Meeting: Beginning on July 1, 2017
- Outreach to potential users: Beginning on July 1, 2017 via press release, news article, flyers, local social service providers, promotional information given to participants
- See **Appendix (6) for more details on milestones and timeline.**

## **H. Project Impact:**

The immediate impact of the Project is that Amherst residents experiencing crises have timely access to face-to-face human interactions with knowledgeable case workers, to help them access emergency food, shelter, medical or mental health service. On a less immediate but on-going basis, those in need are assisted in navigating through the maze of applications for public housing, employment, disability incomes, Food Stamps, MassHealth insurance, private housing, and other resources. Quantitative measures can be made of the number of people who have applied for, and have received public benefits. The principal tangible outcome of the project is an increase in personal income. An enhancement in the overall sense of personal well-being, due to the support and ready access to a friendly and

knowledgeable staff, is a less tangible though no less significant outcome. It can be measured by the Consumer Well-being Survey. The overarching goal of the Center is for self-empowerment and self-sufficiency. **See Appendix (7) for Project Impact, Direct/Indirect Outcomes, and Quantitative & Qualitative Measurements**

This service is linked to other human service programs in the community. ACC collaborates with local agencies such as Craig's Doors, Amherst Survival Center, Eliot Homeless Services, and Jones Library. It works regionally with Western Mass Network to End Homelessness and Hampshire County Jail and House of Correction. It meets with case workers from other local social service agencies twice a month to case-conference common clients. It meets once a month with Town-sponsored Homeless System to address homeless issues. **See Appendix (8) for Community Partners and Outcomes.**



**Amherst  
Community  
Connections**

*Housing is THE Solution to Homelessness*

121 N Pleasant St. PO Box 141, Amherst MA 01004  
(413) 345-0737

**One-Stop Resource Center Program Budget**

**Expenses**

**Personnel**

Case Manager	31,200 (\$20 x 30 hr/wk x 52 wks)
Office Assistant	11,440 (\$11 x 20 hr/wk x 52 wks)
Program Director	14,560 (\$28 x 10 hr/wk x 52 wks)
Subtotal	57,200
Payroll Taxes & Benefits 20%	11,440
Work-Study Students	2,640 (\$11x15 hr/wk x32 wks x 2 x 0.25)

Total Personnel 71,280

**Other Costs**

**Program Support**

Client Financial Assistance	2,500
Copying/Printing	300
Supplies/Office/Food	1,500
Insurance Professional	800
Staff mileage/Travel	250

5,350

Program Facilities 3,000

Total Other Costs 8,350

Total Program Costs 79,630

Overhead 15% 11,945

**Total Expenses 91,575**

**Sources of Funding**

Town of Amherst	50,000	Pending
Mature Worker Program	13,728	Pending
Western Mass Community Foundation	20,000	Pending
Individual Contributions	7,847	Pending

**Total Sources of Funding 91,575**



**Amherst  
Community  
Connections**

121 N Pleasant St. PO Box 141, Amherst MA 01004  
(413) 345-0737

*Housing is THE Solution to Homelessness*

**Attachment A.  
ACC FY 2017 BUDGET**

<b>1. REVENUE</b>	
a.) Appeals (Three times/year; Valley Gives online fundraising)	\$25,000
b.) Grant --CPA	\$50,000
c.) Grant --Mature Workers Program	\$14,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$89,000</b>
<b>2. EXPENDITURE</b>	
a) Client financial assistance	\$2,500
b) Community relations	\$300
c) Copying/printing	\$1500
d) Food/household/office	\$3,000
e) Phone	\$400
f) Postage	\$500
g) Fundraising expenses	\$3,500
h) Rent--office	\$5,500
i) Rent subsidies for Housing First tenants	\$35,000
j) Insurances	\$2,000
k) Transportation	\$300
l) Wages	\$34,500
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$89,000</b>

## *Attachment D. Board of Directors*

### **Amherst Community Connections--Board of Directors and Officers**

**1. Hwei-Ling Greeney**

**Board Role:** President and Treasurer

**Affiliations:** Executive Director of Amherst Community Connections

**Residence:** Amherst

**2. Sundarii McGrigg (Client representative)**

**Board Role:** Chair

**Affiliations:** Self-employed Amherst businesswoman

**Residence:** Amherst

**3. Amherst KaCey**

**Board Role:** Clerk

**Affiliations:** Amherst Town Meeting Member, retired social worker

**Residence:** Amherst

**4. Kathleen Cinquegrana (Client representative)**

**Board Role:** Member

**Affiliations:** Former U.S. Postal Service worker

**Residence:** Amherst

**5. Maria Yorgakopoulou (Client representative)**

**Board Role:** Member

**Affiliations:** Retired Amherst restaurant owner

**Residence:** Amherst

**6. Tom Ehrgood**

**Board Role:** Member

**Affiliations:** Amherst College

**Residence:** Amherst

**7. Pat Creaser**

**Board Role:** Member

**Affiliations:** Retired human service worker

**Residence:** Amherst

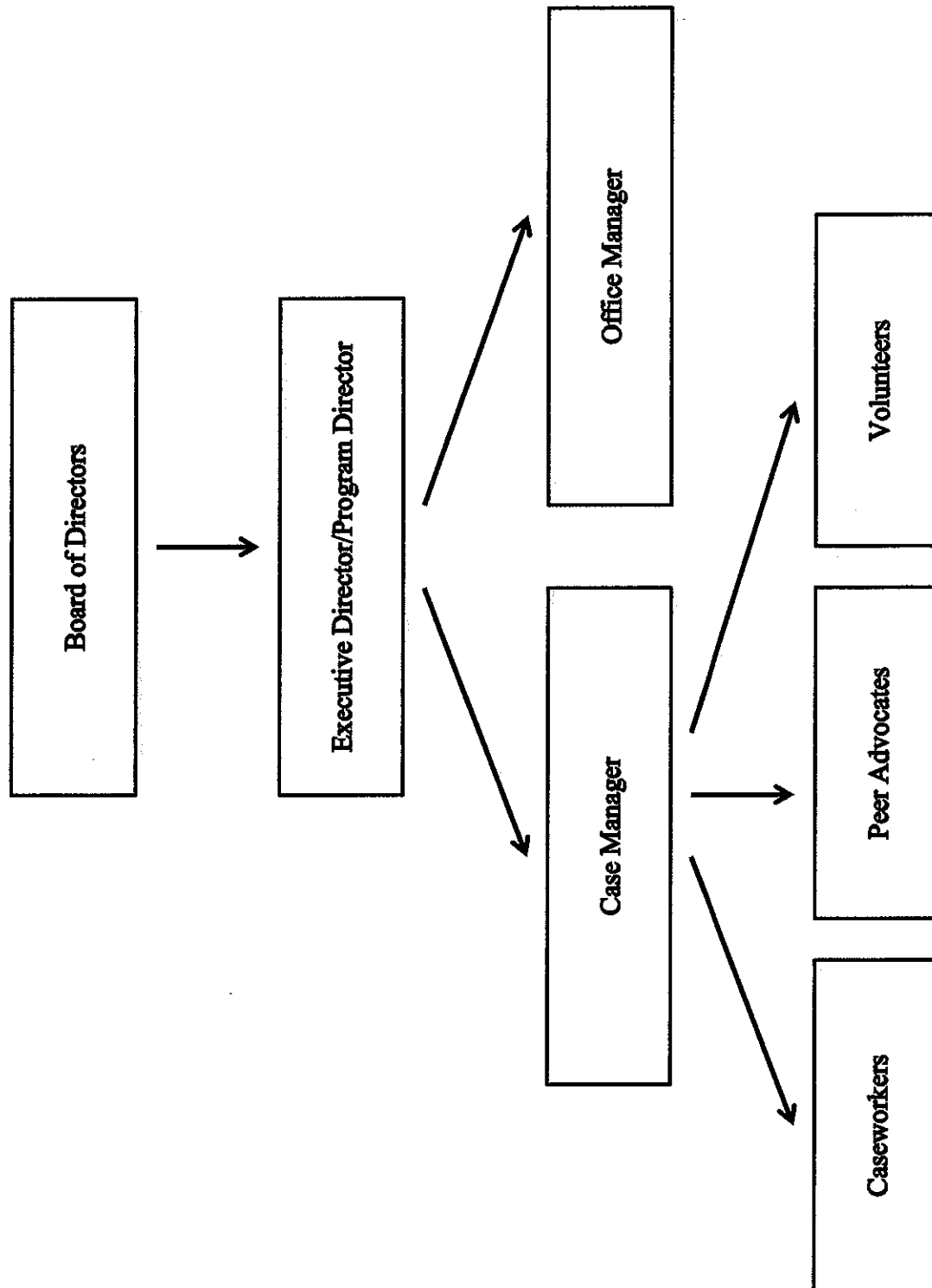
**8. Jane Braaten**

**Board Role:** Member

**Affiliations:** Educator

**Residence:** Hadely

*Attachment E. AMHERST COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART*





**Amherst  
Community  
Connections**

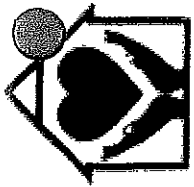
*Appendix (1.): Sample of ACC Resource Guides*

## Amherst Street Smart Guide (2016)

*Housing is THE Solution to Homelessness*

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
FREE Grocery	ASC (11—3pm)	ASC (11—3 pm) Bangs (9 am)	FBC (2—4 pm)	ASC (11-7 pm)	ASC (11-3 pm)	NBA 12:30	NBA 12:30
FREE Meal	ASC (Noon-1)	ASC (Noon-1)	UUSA (8 -10) NBA (4:00 pm)	ASC (Noon &5 pm)	ASC (Noon-1)	NBA (Noon-1)	NBA (Noon-1)
FREE Medical Care	DC (9-Noon) ASC (12:30- 1:30)	DC (9-Noon)	DC (9-Noon)	DC (9-Noon) ASC (4:00-5:00)	DC (9-Noon)		
MassHealth, SNAP, ID, Prescription	DC (9-Noon)		UUSA (8-10am)	DC (9-Noon)			
Amherst Survival Center	Doctor: 12:30- 1:30	SNAP: 11:30- 12:30  Voucher: 1-2:30 (Med., Utilities)		Job search: 11:30-1 Mass Health 1- 2:30 pm Doctor: 5-6			
Homeless Help	ACC (8-5 ) VS (8:30-4 pm)	ACC (8-5) IHF(1-3 pm) Jones Library (2-5 pm)	ACC (8-5 ) VS (8:30-4 pm) NBA (4:00 pm)	ACC (8-5) Jones Library (2-5 pm)	ACC (8-5) VS (8:30-4 pm)	ACC	ACC

- ACC: Amherst Community Connections, 121 N. Pleasant Street, Amherst, 413-345-0737. (8-11-Walk-ins welcome; 11-5 by appointment only)
- ASC: Amherst Survival Center, 138 Sunderland Road, Amherst, 413-549-3968 (For lunch, take #33 bus at 10:41 or 11:21 am—Post Office stop)
- Bangs Community Center: 70 Boltwood Walk, Amherst, 413-259-3060
- DC: Drop-in Center, 43 Center Street, Northampton, 413-586-6750
- FBC: First Baptist Church, 434 N Pleasant Street, Amherst, 413-549-3596
- IHF: Interfaith Help Fund (Sept. to May), Northampton Senior Center, 67 Conz Street, Northampton. 413-587-1228. Need ACC referral.
- Jones Library: 43 Amity Street, Amherst, 413-259-3090
- NBA: Not Bread Alone, First Congregational Church, 165 Main St. Amherst, 413-548-1270
- UUSA: Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst, 121 N Pleasant Street, Amherst, 413-253-2848
- VS: Veteran's Services, Bangs Community Center, 70 Boltwood Walk, Amherst, 413-259-3028



Amherst  
Community  
Connections

Housing is THE Solution to Homelessness

121 N Pleasant St. PO Box 141, Amherst MA 01004  
(413) 345-0737

## Appendix (2):

# Listing of Jobs

Sample of Daily Job Postings

Date: Friday, 12/16/2016

Pay	Business	Job type	Phone #	Location
negotiable	Food 101 Bar & Bistro	Line cook/ Prep cook	413-535-3101	South Hadley
negotiable	Food 101 Bar & Bistro	Dishwasher	413-535-3101	South Hadley
experience & tips	Master Chef	waitstaff or dishwasher	413-687-0074	South Hadley
hourly & tips	Goten Restaurant	Waitstaff	in person	Sunderland
\$22/hr	Wine club/lounge	Hostesses/ cocktail server	310-868-6739	Amherst
\$35k-\$60k/yr	Manny's TV & Appliance	Sales Staff	in person	Greenfield or Hadley

\*Disclaimer: This information was taken from craigslist, and Amherst Community Connections is not responsible for the accuracy of the content.





**Amherst  
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*Housing is THE Solution to Homelessness*

Appendix (2):<sup>01004</sup>

*Sample of Daily Housing Postings*

121 N Pleasant St. PO Box 141, Amherst MA

(413) 345-0737

Date: Friday, 12/16/2016 Rooms under \$650/month

CONTACT	PRICE/mon.	PHONE NUMBER	LOCATION
Antonio	\$475	413-658-4571	South Hadley
Emily	\$400	413-302-5347	Holyoke
Priscilla	\$500	413-475-3616	Greenfield
Donna	\$600	413-533-4262	South Hadley
Katrina	\$450	831-566-7553	Greenfield

\*Disclaimer: This information was taken from craigslist and other sources, and Amherst Community Connections is not responsible for the accuracy of the content.



**Amherst  
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(413) 345-0737

*Appendix ( 3 ) :*

## **ACC Sponsored-events for January, 2017**

**Monday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>**, 11-1 pm @ UUSA, 121 N Pleasant Street, ***FREE New Year's Community Lunch***

**Wednesday, January 4<sup>th</sup>**, 10-11:30 am @ ACC office, ***Basic Market Rate Housing Search Workshop***, Kate Shapiro, HAP

**Wednesday, January 11<sup>th</sup>**, 10-11:30 am @ ACC office, ***211& Other Useful Local Resources Clearing House***, Karen Cassidy, ACC

**Monday, January 16<sup>th</sup>**, 11-1 pm @ UUSA, 121 N Pleasant Street, ***FREE MLK's Birthday Community Lunch***

**Wednesday, January 18<sup>th</sup>**, 10-11:30 am @ ACC office, ***The Fun & Joy of Body Movement***, Pat Creaser, ACC

**Wednesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>**, 10-11:30 am @ ACC office, ***A Hopeful Housing Overview for 2017***, Hwei-Ling Greeney, ACC

**Friday, January 27<sup>th</sup>**, 4-5:30 pm @ ACC office, ***Dinner on ACC: Meet & Greet State Rep. Solomon Goldstein-Rose***

**Monday, January 30<sup>th</sup>**, 11:30-2:00 pm @ ACC office, ***Low Income Housing Search Workshop***, Kate Shapiro, HAP (Lunch provided; **RSVP by Wed. 1/25**)

Amherst Community Connections

121 North Pleasant Street, Amherst, MA

"To empower, advocate, and assist those in need."

December, 2016

Volume 1, Issue 11



Amherst  
Community  
Connections

Housing is THE Solution to Homelessness

# What's Up?!

## Finding Hope

By Abra Lipton

In October, ACC opened applications for the town of Amherst's first ever Housing First Program. On October 31<sup>st</sup>, we held a lottery drawing at the Bangs Community Center to choose the final three candidates who would receive a housing voucher and full wrap-around support services from ACC. When Joan's name was called, out during that lottery she says, "I was so shocked, I couldn't feel anything and then three minutes later, so many emotional tears came." She explained to me that ACC's One Stop Resource Center and the Housing First Program have been the first good things to happen to her since she became homeless.



Joan, pictured left, working with an ACC staff member.

Joan is local, she graduated from Amherst Regional High School in the 70s, and then went on to study at Greenfield Community College and the Porter & Chester Institute in Chicopee. She was the only female graduate of their computer technician and electronics program. After high school, she travelled and was in 4 bands before she settled down with her husband to start a family. When they lost their home, she made sure that he got a room, as he has Parkinson's and dementia. However, where he lives, you can only have someone over once a week. It's also difficult for Joan to make it up all the steps to get to his place, as she has an oxygen tank. They are now separated, but she still calls him her husband.

Joan has been homeless for about two years now and lives in her truck, which she parks in various spots around Amherst. She told me about the difficulties and fears that come with living out of her vehicle, "Each night I lay my head back onto the seat and I never know whether I'm going to be safe. When you park, you're taking a gamble." She told me that she prays every night before going to sleep, for god to watch over her truck and she thanks god every morning that she made it through the night.

Joan notes that as soon as she came into ACC there was a shift in her life, she says that ACC staff, "Asked questions that should've been asked a long time ago, that other agencies never ask." The ACC staff offered her food, the office was warm, they gave her a blanket, as well as doing a complete work up. They put her straight to work, filling out forms and applications and sending them out as fast as possible. When a few of them came back saying that they were incomplete or needed to be changed (which often happens in these processes, (cont. on pg. 5)



All are welcome to our holiday meals on Dec. 26 and Jan. 2!

## What's New?!

**Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>,**  
10-11:30 am @ACC's office,  
*Needle Safety and Overdose Education*, Brita Loftus and Jill Shanahan, Tapestry Health

**Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>,**  
10-11:30 am @ACC's office,  
*Self Hypnosis for Relaxation*, Cynthia Fredo, Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst.

**Wednesday, December 21<sup>st</sup>,**  
10-11:30 am @ACC's office,  
*Staying Happy and Healthy with HIV*, Laura Hudson, A Positive Place.

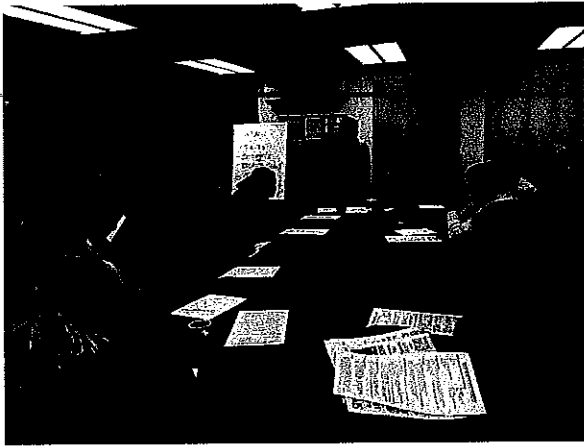
**Wednesday, December 28<sup>th</sup>,**  
10-11:30 am @ACC's office,  
*New Year, New You: Making New Year's Resolutions*, Hwei-Ling Greeney, ACC.

**Monday, December 26<sup>th</sup>,**  
noon-1 @ Unitarian Meetinghouse, *Community Holiday Meal*, all are welcome!

**Monday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>,** noon  
-1 @ Unitarian Meetinghouse, *New Year Community Meal*, all are welcome!

# Your Housing Rights

By Kyra Simpson and Abra Lipton



Maggie, pictured in the center, speaking to ACC participants about their housing rights.

Margaret Curran, or Maggie, was an intern at ACC last fall and now has taken her advocacy a step further and gotten a job at the Massachusetts Fair Housing Center in Holyoke. She graduated from UMass last May with a bachelor's degree in legal studies. She says that she interned with us because she was very interested in fair housing and wanted more experience in the non-profit world. ACC was a stepping stone that helped Maggie get the experience she needed to find a job that she was passionate about. While at ACC, Maggie says she gained valuable experience in fundraising and social media. Now, she gives training seminars about fair housing, as well as managing case work under an attorney's supervision.

Maggie came back to ACC in October for one of our Weekly Incubator Meetings to speak to our participants and staff about the Massachusetts Fair Housing Act. At this meeting, Maggie talked about the rights that people are guaranteed by the government when it comes to housing and about how the Massachusetts Fair Housing Center helps people

assert their housing rights and overcome housing discrimination.

The Massachusetts Fair Housing Center provides legal help to those who are facing housing discrimination. They hear people's complaints and investigate them. If there is evidence of discrimination, legal representation is provided free of charge. To investigate if a landlord is being discriminatory, "testers" from the Massachusetts Fair Housing Center will attempt to rent an apartment from the landlord in question to determine if they discriminate when deciding who to rent apartments to.

Maggie explained that there are certain categories that are protected under state and/or federal law, and that landlords cannot refuse to rent housing to people in these categories because they are in the category. In Massachusetts, the protected categories include race, color, national origin, sex, families with children, disability, marital status, ancestry, public assistance, housing subsidies/rental assistance, and genetic.

For instance, if a landlord refused to rent an apartment to someone because the person had a Section 8 housing voucher, the Massachusetts Fair Housing Center would give the person free legal advice and representation so that they can get into the housing. Or, if a landlord says that they will not rent to a disabled person because their building is not equipped for their needs, legally, the landlord is required to modify the building so that it will fit the person's needs, and the Massachusetts Fair Housing Center will legally help with this. Or, if a landlord is attempting to evict a tenant because the police are called to the apartment regularly due to domestic violence, the Massachusetts Fair Housing Center will legally advocate for the tenant so that they can stay in their apartment. Additionally, if a person gets into an apartment with the help of the Massachusetts Fair Housing Center and the landlord raises the rent out of retaliation, the Massachusetts Fair Housing Center will help the person legally to assure that their rent is not raised.

Maggie explains that she's, "thankful to ACC for engaging me and seeing how important the political process and advocacy are." She explains that she's interested in advocating for housing rights because, "It isn't a hot button topic—it's been around forever—being an advocate and giving people a voice is super important." Maggie has taken her internship experience in advocacy and made it into a career, she's making a real difference for individuals in housing crises and ACC would like to commend her for that!

If you or someone you know thinks that you could benefit from the services of the Massachusetts Fair Housing Center, call (413) 539-9796, or go to <http://www.massfairhousing.org>. The office is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and they are located at 7 Suffolk St # 401, Holyoke, MA 01040.

## ACC'S MISSION

ACC's mission is to empower, advocate and assist those in need with housing, employment, Social Security Disability application, financial emergencies, and issues affecting individual's ability to lead a stable and productive life. Assistance with...

- Disability Application
- Housing & Job Searches
- Free Cell Phone Applications
- Food Stamps & Fuel Assistance
- \$ for rent, meds, utilities, etc.
- And more!

# Back on The Hunt

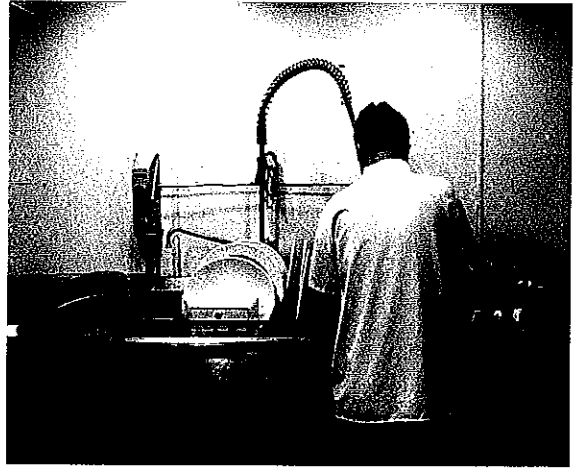
By Lily Frank

Russell started coming to Amherst Community Connections in September, when he found out that he wouldn't be hired back at UMass. He worked at UMass in the Franklin dining hall as a dishwasher for 16 years. Navigating the world of job applications is always difficult, but especially for Russell, who is in his seventies and hasn't needed to apply for a job since 1999. A lot has changed since then. The last time Russell applied for a job, an online job application was unheard of, whereas now it is a standard practice. There's a lot for him to catch up on. However, Russell has been persistent in his job search and throughout his life.

Russell says that he has always been able to find work, ever since he was a teenager and worked at the Belchertown State School in the kitchen. "It was fun," he said when asked about working there, despite also mentioning that he sometimes had to get up at 4 AM to work in the kitchen. He worked for 30-40 hours each week in the kitchen while attending the school there at the same time. The school was for people with developmental challenges, however Russell says that the staff didn't treat students and patients very well. He said that the Belchertown State School was just a place to put people, and there wasn't a lot of formal schooling happening. Educating people wasn't a priority to them, and many people left there without a diploma and lacking skills to navigate the world. The Belchertown State School has since been shut down and was the target of many lawsuits before its closing.

Russell is currently working on writing a book about his life story. So far, he has mainly written about his early life, focusing on his time at the Belchertown State School. He paints a bleak picture of life there. He wrote that, "You have to go by their rules and if you don't, you get punished. It wasn't me getting hurt but some of the others who got hurt. I tried to protect them." He also described them hosing people down, locking people in a room without a mattress, having bars everywhere, and packing 30 beds into a room. Russell is planning on writing more about his later life in his book, but has yet to complete those sections.

Russell has worked many different jobs since then, including as a dishwasher, maintenance, working at a liquor store, and even piece work way back in the day. When I asked Russell about his piece work he said that he had worked in an office stuffing envelopes and sending letters. Russell has faced many challenges in his life, but he has never given up or let those challenges stop him. Russell has a brother who lives in Springfield, but most of his other family lives far away, which has been difficult at times. One thing that has helped him maintain his resilience is his faith. He has gone to church every Sunday throughout his life, and said that his faith has helped him through tough times. Although things are uncertain at the moment, Russell is looking forward to finding and working at his next job, and adding on to the story of his life.



Russell washed dishes at UMass for 16 years before losing his job.

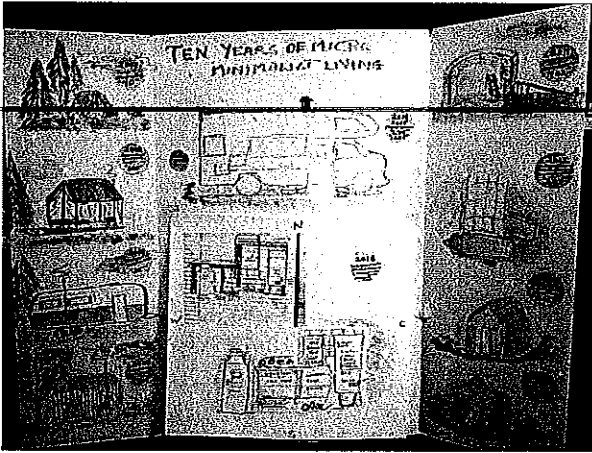
## Needle Safety and Overdose Education

Do you know someone who uses opiates and/or IV drugs? Are you worried about their health and safety? ACC would like to help! Come to our incubator meeting Wednesday, December 7th from 10 am to 11:30 am in the office to participate in an educational talk about Tapestry Health—a local needle exchange program—and the services that they offer. Brita Loftus and Jill Shanahan will be coming in to speak about needle safety and the needle exchange program at Tapestry, as well as about Narcan, a medication that can reverse opiate overdoses and save countless lives. Get educated, and learn how to be prepared for an opiate overdose—you might just save a life!



# Everything You Need

By Abra Lipton



Linda created a timeline of her different shelters for a class she is taking.

the surrounding area. As the seizures grew worse and more frequent, with a heavy heart, Linda knew she had to sell her house and find a different living situation for her own safety. However, the stock market crashed before she could sell it and she ended up losing a lot of money and becoming homeless.

She knew she couldn't live in subsidized housing or stay in shelters because of her chemical sensitivity—they have tenants who smoke and use harsh chemicals to clean. Linda decided to move off the grid, where she wouldn't have to worry about her chemical sensitivity and could start her permaculture business. Linda had always done "jays of all trades" jobs, was a personal care assistant (PCA), and had taken real estate classes so she knew about financing. She took out a seven-year contract to buy a 20+ acre plot, but on the seventh year one of her PCA patients died and the other went to a facility. She was out of a job and had to take another year to pay off her loan.

Meanwhile, the unemployment office told her that if she finished her bachelor's degree, that she started over thirty years ago at UMass, she would receive more unemployment benefits while she was trying to get back on her feet. Now, Linda is finishing up her degree at Greenfield Community College in the food and farming department. She's minoring in alternative energy and already has received her renewable energy certificate, and her permaculture certificate this past summer. She's racing to finish her degree this spring, so she has been taking summer classes and will be doing a winter session. She's doing all of this while living on her land. She hasn't had the means to build a conventional house and she's struggled to build what she has, but every year Linda's property evolves closer towards her vision.

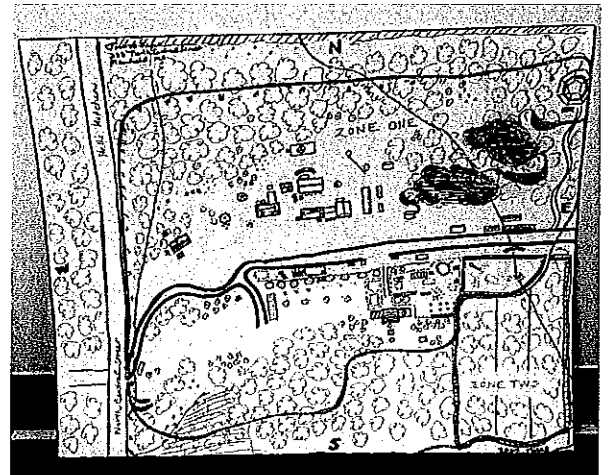
The first year on her land, Linda bought a cheap tent and sleeping bag from Walmart. Since then she has slowly expanded her housing to a shelter consisting of two motor homes, a green house, sheds, a metal dome, and an underground shelter. Linda told me that she has spent her energy on her children for many years and, "now that I have my life to myself, I have the same motivation, I just have to take care of myself." This energy she has, is going into figuring out an appropriate housing situation by working with ACC's staff. Linda has been working with ACC for over 2 years now to figure out a proper living situation and she says, "I still have some fire!" Linda's determination has showed itself not only on her land, but also in her schoolwork and her work with ACC.

She plans on getting cows, goats, rabbits, and chickens for her property. These animals will become a part of the permaculture design, producing manure for the crops, milk, eggs, and the chickens will eat harmful bugs. In the future, Linda wants to bring permaculture to others, and do what she's done on her property for other people.

*\*Linda's name has been changed for privacy purposes.*

Linda\* explains that permaculture is, "everything you need to survive," where, "everything feeds everything." It's an agricultural system in which everything is sustainable and self-sufficient. The word permaculture is made up of the words permanent and agriculture, the idea is to creatively design ethical agricultural systems that can rely on each other to be sustainable, like what you would find in nature. Permaculture is Linda's passion, her goal is to be self-sustainable on her own land, but there have been hurdles in achieving this goal.

Linda has lived in the Valley for 35 years as a mother, a business owner, and a permaculture designer. She did everything right in terms of housing—she saved up money from her small business and bought a house in the hill towns. Linda planted fruit trees and started permaculture systems around her house. Then, she started having seizures in her sleep. Her doctor told her that she was having them because of chemical sensitivity and the people burning wood in



A map Linda created of her property, including the current permaculture designs.

# Meet The Team

Kyra Simpson

Kyra says that she chose to volunteer at ACC because she is very passionate about helping people—specifically in helping marginalized populations. In coming to work at ACC, Kyra wanted to contribute whatever she could towards helping individuals who are homeless connect with the resources that they need in order to improve their situations. She also wanted to better understand what it means to be homeless and how to help individuals who are homeless. ACC is a good fit for her because she is working towards becoming a social worker—Kyra is in her last year as a Psychology major at UMass, and is applying to graduate school for social work in the fall. ACC, as a small non-profit, has allowed her to get firsthand experience working one-on-one with individuals to help them with a variety of issues that they may be struggling with. Kyra says that, “this experience has been invaluable for me, and has helped affirm my decision to become a social worker. I have learned an immense amount about how to work with and help people, and a lot about myself.”



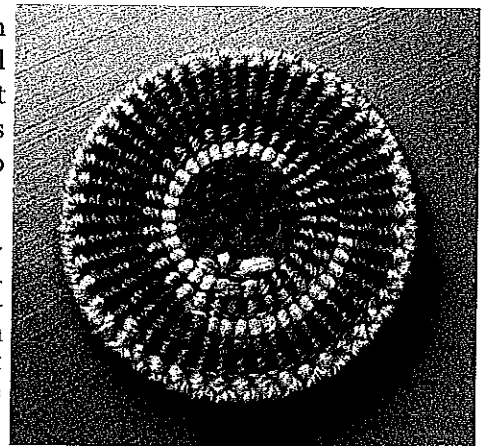
Kyra, pictured, wants to become a social worker after she graduates.

In Kyra's free time, she enjoys dance—such as ballet and contemporary—as well as horseback riding and rock climbing. She says that she also likes to relax and watch television at her house, going on hikes, reading and writing. Her strengths include conducting research and writing about what she has learned, using graphic design to create eye-catching flyers and posters, and relating to the people that she works with at ACC. As the events coordinator for ACC, Kyra stays very organized—keeping track of all of ACC's events and making sure that they all happen as planned. She explains that being ACC's event coordinator takes a lot of planning and forethought, but this position has allowed her to improve on many different skills while working at ACC.

## Finding Hope

Cont. from pg.1

as many homeless individuals are missing key parts of the applications), Joan was disappointed, but not ready to quit. She came right back into ACC and worked on finishing up her applications—it's a slow and tedious process, but Joan has been determined to fight for the housing she deserves. Now that Joan is a part of the Housing First Program, she's working even harder to find a place to call her own.



In Joan's spare time, she enjoys crocheting and using looms to create hats, blankets, and even curtains and pillows. She started crocheting when she was 14 years old, and started using her loom 3 years ago. She doesn't charge for her creations, only asks that if you want something that you buy the yarn. Joan has a passion for giving back, when she was leaving our interview session, the first thing she asked was if she could volunteer at ACC and help other people once she got back on her feet.



Some of Joan's creations.

Joan's creations are not only beautiful, but she puts careful thought into the meaning of each color used. The creation above is a representation of her time here working with the staff at ACC and was given to our executive director. The yellow stands for her smile and the encouragement she received from people in the office. The green represents all of the hard work that Joan did to file an assortment of applications for housing and benefits. Then the red shows a snag in the applications, many of them were returned and she needed to include more information to meet the requirements. The return to the yellow signifies the red times smoothing out, she got her birth certificate and finally completed the applications. Then the journey starts again with the green and the next strand of yellow is hope for the Housing First lottery drawing. Lastly, Joan says that the pink means that, “I have heartfelt love again, that someone is going to help me permanently.” All of the staff here at ACC would like to congratulate Joan on completing her applications and winning the lottery, we look forward to working with her further and finding her a permanent living situation!



# The Challenge

By Abra Lipton

Being at the bottom is a challenge, a challenge that ACC strives to help people through. There are other programs in the area that also strive to help, that ACC oftentimes relies on. Brenda Berge Galloway is a community health worker for the Department for Community Health at Mercy Medical Center. Her job includes helping people get MassHealth, whether that be helping them with the application, or helping them to keep their health insurance benefits. She can also assist in applying for and navigating SNAP benefits.

Brenda explained to me that she found the job 16 years ago when she was a professional volunteer in the local school system. Her friend let her know that they had a position in the Department of Community Health, through AmeriCorps Vista. Brenda explains that she feels like she just fell right into this career, "and so I got bit in."



Brenda, pictured left, has been working for the Department for Community Health for 16 years.

Outside of helping people through her work, Brenda is a mother and a grandmother. She's also getting married on January 1<sup>st</sup>, which she tells me, "a whole new world has opened up in front of me." She enjoys traveling, and has travelled up and down the east coast as well as Texas. Her youngest son is stationed in Japan, so their future goal is to visit him there.

Brenda says that the most important change MassHealth needs to make is how they contact people. Many homeless individuals are transient, and when MassHealth can't contact them, they unenroll them. She explains that it's important to keep your address current, if you need a permanent mailing address, consider using ACC's address. To do so, you must come into the office to fill out a waiver.

Brenda's services are easy to access; she calls herself the "wanderer". She's in a different town every day, and sometimes travels to two different towns in one day. Her office is at the Mercy Medical Center in Springfield, but she goes to Amherst, Northampton, and Westfield regularly, as well as Greenfield on occasion. She's in Amherst every Wednesday morning at the Wednesday Community Breakfasts in the Unitarian Meetinghouse.

Brenda explains to me that her job is challenging at times—she wishes that everyone who needs MassHealth and SNAP benefits could easily access them. We joked together about how difficult applications can be for everyone, and then spoke seriously about the challenges those of us who are less fortunate may experience. Homeless individuals often lose important documents or have them stolen from them, as well as a lack of a permanent address and little access to computers. Most of MassHealth's communications are through snail mail or telephone calls. Brenda is determined to help with all of this. Brenda and staff members at ACC can help to retrieve necessary documents, and here in the office we have computers with internet access, as well as a phone and applications for free cell phones. Brenda explains that she doesn't back down from these challenges or any others, "that's why I love my job; I love a challenge, that harder the case the better."

Brenda can be met with every Wednesday morning at the breakfast in the Unitarian Meetinghouse.

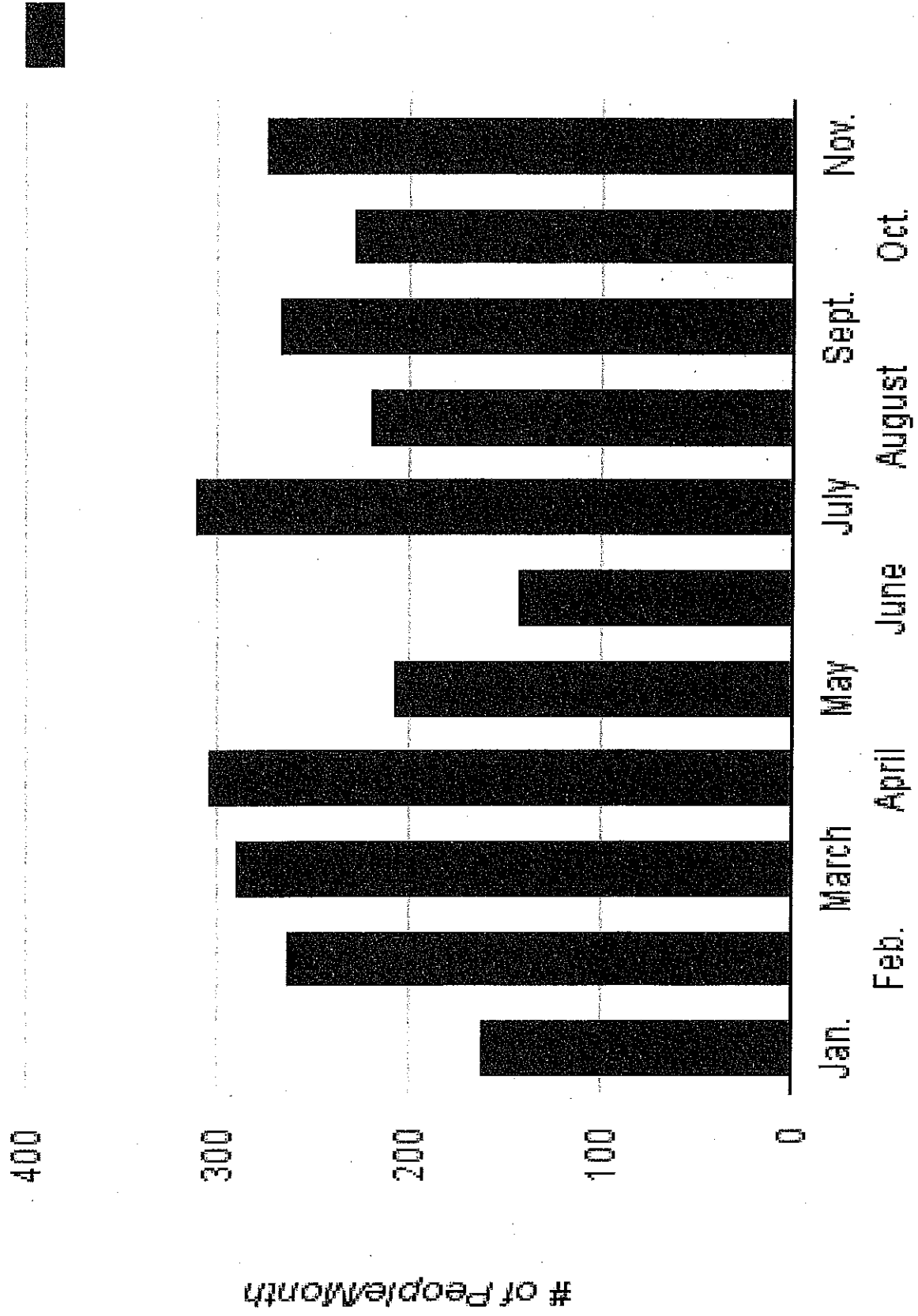
## ACC'S OFFICE HOURS

- Monday—Friday: 8-noon walk ins; noon—5 by appointment at ACC's office
- Tuesday & Thursday: 2-5 at the Jones Library
- Contact us at (413) 345-0737
- Located in the Amherst Unitarian Meetinghouse
- 121 North Pleasant Street, P.O. Box 141  
Amherst, MA 01004



Appendix (5):

ACC One-Stop Resource Center Monthly Attendance



Monthly attendance, 2016

## Appendix (6): ACC--Feasibility/Milestones and Timeline

<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Description</b>
Volunteer and college intern recruitment, orientation and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning on July 1, 2017</li> <li>• Attend Amherst College, and UMass Non-profit Recruitment, Sept. 2017 and March, 2018</li> <li>• Arrange to speak at Amherst Woman's Club, Amherst Club, Rotary Club, etc.</li> <li>• Posting info on ACC Facebook and website for volunteers recruitment</li> <li>• On-going</li> </ul>	Program director (PD) will begin the recruitment with the goal of securing enough workforce to staff the One-Stop Resource Center 8:30 am -5:30 pm five days a week
Hiring a case manager (CM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the hiring by July 31, 2017</li> <li>• Complete the orientation and on-the-job training by Aug. 15, 2017</li> </ul>	PD will begin advertising CM the position on July 1, 2017 on ACC website and Facebook, local human service agencies, Council of Social Agencies of Hampshire County (COSA), and other outlets.
Grand opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July 1, 2017: beginning the community outreach about the opening of the One-Stop Resource Center</li> </ul>	<p>PD will see flyers/promotional materials designed and disseminated to the public—focusing on low income households. The grand opening will be promoted via ACC website and Facebook, local human service agencies, COSA, etc.</p> <p>CM will begin to work with participants 30 hours per week and will coordinate case management among office manager and case workers.</p>
Research and design of new resource guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July 1, 2017; on-going</li> </ul>	PD will work with case workers to generate appropriate resource guides to support participants
Support & Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly &amp; monthly meeting; on-going</li> </ul>	PD meets with CM and case workers weekly

### Appendix (7): ACC—Impact, Outcomes, and Quantitative/Qualitative Measurements

Project Impact	Direct Outcomes	Indirect Outcomes	Quantitative/Qualitative Measurements
Quantity, and quality of volunteers & interns (V & I)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sufficient &amp; excellent quality of volunteers and interns (V&amp; I) to staff the One-Stop Resource Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interns chose a career in human service fields</li> <li>Satisfied participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of Full-time-equivalent V&amp; I</li> <li>Maintain 1:1 worker &amp; participant ratio</li> <li>Post-graduation intern job survey</li> <li>Participant satisfaction survey</li> </ul>
Quality of the Case Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organized operation at the Resource Center</li> <li>Participants see an increase in income and benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good coordination of case management flow</li> <li>Timely follow-up on participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance data</li> <li>Achievement data</li> <li>Participant satisfaction survey</li> </ul>
Quality of the Resource Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcoming space</li> <li>Knowledgeable staff</li> <li>Well-equipped office</li> <li>Short waiting time</li> <li>Same day service</li> <li>Participants see an increase in income and benefits</li> <li># of participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High retention rate/low absence rate among V&amp;I</li> <li>High morale among V&amp;I</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant satisfaction survey</li> <li>V&amp;I satisfaction survey</li> <li>Attendance data</li> <li>Achievement data</li> </ul>
Research and design of new resource guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More up-to-date resource guides for participants to access</li> <li>Timely dissemination of resource guides in print and online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional resource guides on-line for wider use by other service agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of copies printed for each resource guide</li> <li>Keeping resource guides updated and relevant</li> </ul>
Weekly Incubator Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More informed participants</li> <li>Improved self-sufficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attracting additional users for the Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance data</li> <li>Attendees satisfaction survey</li> </ul>
Frequent Flyer Reward Program (FFRP) for the Homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incentivize homeless participants to stay focused on their path to self-sufficiency</li> <li>Earn bus passes or gift cards to supplement their income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attracting additional users for the Center</li> <li>The FFRP records helps to document one's progress and goals accomplished</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tracking # of people participating in the FFRP</li> <li>Tracking individual, and collective progress made toward self-sufficiency</li> </ul>

### Appendix (8): ACC—Project Impact/Community Partners and Outcomes

Community Partners	Frequency of partnership	Outcomes
Craig's Doors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Nov. –1 May: 3/week</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACC provides onsite advocacy and case management to 20-30 shelter guests/week</li> </ul>
Jones Public Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year round: 2/week</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACC provides onsite advocacy and case management to 10-15 library patrons/week</li> </ul>
Amherst Unitarian Society-Community Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year round: 1/month</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACC assists 10-15 meal guests/wk on housing &amp; other issues</li> </ul>
Amherst Care Providers Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year round: 2/month</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss clients of mutual concern to better coordinate agencies' case management of individual clients</li> <li>• Share resources and information</li> <li>• Provide support among agencies</li> </ul>
Amherst Human Service Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year round: 1/month</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share resources and information</li> <li>• Provide support among agencies</li> </ul>
Amherst Homelessness System Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year round: 1/month</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss solutions to homelessness issues on a municipal level</li> <li>• Discuss clients of mutual concern to better coordinate agencies' case management of individual clients</li> <li>• Share resources and information</li> <li>• Provide mutual support among agencies</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not Bread Alone</li> <li>• Amherst Survival Center</li> <li>• Family Outreach Amherst</li> <li>• ServiceNet</li> <li>• Amherst Housing Authority</li> <li>• Eliot Homeless Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year round: When needs arise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referrals of clients for goods and services</li> <li>• Mutual assistance among agencies for information dissemination</li> <li>• Share resources and information</li> </ul>
Hampshire County Jail and House of Correction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year round: 1/month</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACC provides onsite advocacy and case management in the jail to 2-5 inmates/mon. on re-entry plan</li> <li>• Share resources and information</li> <li>• Provide mutual support among agencies</li> </ul>
Western Mass Network to End Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year round: 1/month</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share resources and information</li> <li>• Provide support among agencies</li> </ul>
Clean Slate Substances Treatment Clinics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year round: When needs arise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)</li> <li>• Mutual client referrals for efficient drug treatment/client advocacy</li> </ul>